A LETTER

From *Artemiza* in the Town, to *Chloë* in the Country. *1679.*

By a Person of HONOUR.

Chloë, in Verse, by your Command I write;
Shortly you'll bid me ride astride, and fight.
These Talents better with our Sex agree,
Than lofty flights of dangerous Poetrie,
Amongst the men, —— I mean the men of Wit,
At least that pass'd for such, before they writ.
How many bold Adventures for the Bays,
Proudly designing large return of praise?
Who durst that stormy pathless World explore,
Were soon dasht back, and wrackt on the dull shore,
Broke of that little stock they had before.
How would a womans tottering Barque be tost,
Where stoutest Ships (the men of Wit) are lost?
When I reflect on this, I straight grow wise,
And my own self thus gravely I advise:
Dear *Artemiza*, Poetry is a Snare,
Bedlam has many Mansions,-----have a care.
Your Muse diverts you, makes the Reader sad;
You fancie y'are inspir'd, he thinks you mad.
But like an Arrant woman, as I am
No sooner well convinc'd, writing's a shame,
That Whore is scarce a more reproachful name
Than Poetess, ————
Like Men that marry, or like Maids that woe,
'Cause 'tis the very worst thing they can do,
Pleas'd with the Contradiction and the Sin,
Methinks I stand on Thorns till I begin.
Y'expect to hear at least what Loves have past
In this lewd Town, since you and I met last.
But how, my deareſt *Chloë*, shall I set
My Pen to write what I would fain forget;
Or name that lost thing Love, without a tear,
Since so debauch'd by Ill-bred Customs here?
" Love, the most generous Passion of the Minde,
" The softest Refuge Innocence can finde.
" The safe Director of unguided Youth,
" Fraught with kinde Wishes, and secur'd by Truth.
" That Cordial drop Heaven in our Cup hath thrown,
" To make the nauseous Draught of Life go down.
" In which one onely Blessing God might raise,
" In Lands of Atheists, subsidies of praise;
" For none did e're so dull and stupid prove,
" But felt a God, and blest his power in Love.
This onely Joy for which poor We were made,
Is grown, like Play, to be an errant Trade.
The Rooks creep in, and it has got of late;
As many little Cheats and Tricks as that.
But what yet more a Womans heart would vex,
'Tis chiefly carri'd on by our own Sex.
Our silly Sex, who born like Monarchs free,
Turn Captives for a meaner Libertie,
And hate Restraint, though but from Infancie.
They call whatever is not common, nice,
And deaf to Natures Rules and Loves Advice,
Forsake the Pleasure, to pursue the Vice.
To an exact perfection they have wrought
The Action Love; the Passion is forgot.

'Tis below Wit (they tell ye) to admire;
And ev'n without approving, they desire.
Their private Wish obeys the publick Voice;
'Twixt good and bad, Whimsey decides, not Choice.
Fashions grow up for tast; at Forms they strike;
They know what they would have, not what they like.
B-----is a Beauty; if some few agree
To call him so, the rest to that degree
Affected are, that with their Ears they see.
Where I was visiting the other night,
Comes a fine Lady with her humble Knight,
Who had prevail'd on her, through her own skill,
At his Request, though much against her will,
To come to *London*. ——
As the Coach stopt, we heard her Voice more loud
Than a great-belly'd woman in a Croud,
Telling the Knight that her Affairs require
He for some hours obsequiously retire.
I think she was asham'd to have him seen;
Hard fate of Husbands the Gallant had been,
(Though a diseas'd ill-favour'd fool) brought in.
Dispatch (says she) that business you pretend,
Your Beastly Visit to your drunken friend.
A Bottle ever makes you look so fine.
Methinks I long to smell you stink of Wine.
Your Country-drinking breath's enough to kill
Sowre Ale, corrected with a Lemon-pill.
Prethee farewel, we'll meet again anon;
The necessary Thing bows and is gone.
She flies up stairs, and all the haste does show,
That nasty antick postures will allow.
And thus bursts out, Dear Madam, am not I
The alter'd'it Creature breathing? ---- Let me die,
I finde my self ridiculously grown,
Embarrassed with being out of Town.
Rude and untaught, like any *Indian* Queen,
My Country-nakedness is strangely seen.
How is Love govern'd, Love that rules the State!
And pray who are the men most worn of late?
When I was marri'd, Fools were A-la-mode;
The men of Wit were then held incommode.
Slow in Belief, and fickle in Desire
Who, ere they'll be perswaded, must enquire,
As if they came to spy, not to admire.
With searching Wisdom, fatal to their ease,
They still finde out why, what, may, should not please.
Nay, take themselves for injur'd, when we dare
Make 'em think better of us than we are.
And if we hide our frailties from their sights,
Call us deceitful Gilts, and Hypocrites.
They little guess who at our Arts are griev'd,
The perfect joy of being well deceiv'd.
Inquisitive, as jealous Cuckolds grow,
Rather than not be knowing, they will know
What, being known, creates their certain woe.
Woman should these (of all mankinde) avoid;
For Wonder by clear Knowledge is destroy'd.
Woman, who is an Errant Bird of Night,
(Bold in the Dusk before a Fools dull sight)
Should flie when Reason brings the glaring Light.
But the kinde easie Fool, apt to admire
Himself, trusts us; his follies all conspire
To flatter his, and favour our desire.
Vain of his proper merit, he with ease,
Believes we love him best, who best can please.

On him our gross dull common Flattries pass;
Ever most joyful, when most made an Ass.
Heavy to apprehend; though all mankinde
Perceives us false, the Fop concern'd is blinde;
Who doating on himself ——— ———
Thinks every one that sees him, of his minde.
These are true womens men; ——— here forc'd to cease
Through want of breath, nor will she hold her peace.
She to the window runs, where she had spi'd
Her most esteem'd dear Friend the Monkie ty'd.
With forty smiles, as many antick bows,
As if't had been the Lady of the House,
The dirty chattring Monster she embrac'd,
And made it this fine tender Speech at last:
" Kiss me, thou curious Minature of Man;
" How odde thou art, how pretty, how *Japan!*
" Oh, I could live and die with thee! ——— Then on,
For half an hour in Complement she run.
I took this time to think what Nature meant,
When this mixt thing into the world she sent;
So very wise, yet so impertinent.
One who knew every thing, whom God thought fit
Should be an Ass through Choice, not want of Wit.
Whose Foppery, without the help of Sense,
Could ne'r have rose to such an Excellence.
Nature's as lame in making a true Fop,
As a Philosopher. ——— The very top
And dignity of Folly we attain,
By studious search, and labour of the Brain,
By observation, counsel, and deep thought.
God never made a Coxcomb worth a Groat;
We owe that Name to Industry and Arts;
An eminent Fool must be a Fool of Parts.
And such a one was she, who had turn'd ore
As many Books as Men; lov'd much, read more:
Had a discerning Wit; to her was known
Every ones fault or merit, but her own.
And the good Qualities that ever blest
A woman so distinguisht from the rest,
Except Discretion onely, she possest.
But now, *Mon-cher*, — dear Pugg (she cries) adieu;
And the Discourse broke off, does thus renew:
You smile to see me (who the world, perchance,
Mistakes to have some Wit) so far advance
The Interest of Fools, that I appprove
Their Merit more than means of Wit in Love.
But in our Sex too many proofs there are
Of such who Wits undo, and Fools repair.
This in my time was so receiv'd a Rule,
Hardly a Wench in Town but had her Fool.
The meanest common Slut, who long was grown
The jest and scorn of every Pit-Buffoon,
Had yet left Charms enough to have subdu'd
Some Fop or other, fond to be thought lew'd.
" A Woman's ne'r so wretched, but she can
" Be still reveng'd on her undoer, Man.
How lost soe're, she'll find some Lover more,
A lewd abandon'd Fool, when she's a Whore.
That wretched thing *Corinna*, who had run
Through all the several ways of being undone;
Cozen'd at first by Love, and living then,
By turning the too dear-bought tricks on men.
Gay were the hours, and wing'd with joy they flew,
When first the Town her early Beauties knew.
Courted, admir'd, and lov'd, with Presents fed;
Youth in her looks, and Pleasure in her Bed:

Till Fate, or her ill Angel, thought it fit
To make her doat upon a man of Wit.
Who found 'twas dull to love above a day,
Made his ill-natur'd Jeſt, and went away.
Now ſcorn'd by all, forſaken, and oppreſt,
She's a *Memento mori* to the reſt.
Poor Creature, who unheard-of, as a Flie,
In ſome dark hole muſt all the Winter lie.
Both want and dirt endure a whole half year,
That for one month ſhe----tawdry may appear.
In *Eaſter*-term ſhe gets her a new Gown,
When my young Maſter's Worſhip comes to Town,
From *Pedagogue* and Mother juſt ſet free,
The Heir and hopes of a great Familie,
Which with ſtrong Ale and Beef the Country rules,
And ever ſince the Conqueſt have been fools.
And now with careful proſpect to maintain
This Character, leſt croſſing of the ſtrain
Should men the Booby-breed, his Friends provide
A Couſin of his own for his fair Bride.
And thus ſet out, – ——
With an Eſtate, no Wit, and a new Wife,
(The ſolid Comfort of a Coxcombs life)
Dunghill and peaſe forſook, he comes to Town,
Turns Spark, learns to be lewd, and is undone.
Nothing ſutes more with Vice than want of Senſe;
Fools are ſtill wicked at their own Expence.
This o'regrown School-boy, loſt *Corinna* wins,
And at firſt dath to make an Aſs begins;
Pretends to, like a man that has not known
The Vanities nor Vices of the Town.
Freſh in his Youth, and faithful in his Love,
Eager of Joys which he doth ſeldome provc.
Healthful and ſtrong, he doth no pains endure,
But which the fair one he adores, can cure.
Grateful for Favours does the Sex eſteem,
And Libels none for being kinde to him.
Then of the Lewdneſs of the times complains;
Rayls at the Wits, and Atheiſts: and maintains
'Tis better than good Senſe, than Power and Wealth,
To have a long untainted Youth and Health.
The unbred Puppy, that had never ſeen
A Creature look ſo gay, or talk ſo fine,
Believes, then falls in Love, and then in Debt,
Mortgages all, even to the ancient Seat,
To buy his Miſtriſs a new houſe for life,
To give her Plate and Jewels, robs his Wife.
And when to height of Fondneſs he is grown,
'Tis time to poiſon him, then all's her own.
Thus meeting in her common arms his Fate,
He leaves her Baſtard Heir to his Eſtate.
And as the Race of ſuch an Owl deſerves,
His own dull lawful Progeny he ſtarves.
Nature (who never made a thing in vain,
But does each intereſt to ſome end ordain)
"Wiſely contriv'd kinde-keeping Fools (no doubt)
"To patch up Vices men of Wit wear out.
Thus ſhe ran on two hours, ſome grains of Senſe,
Still mixt with follies of Impertinence.
But now 'tis time I ſhould ſome pity ſhow
To *Chloe*, ſince I cannot chuſe but know
Readers muſt reap the dulneſs Writers ſow.
By the next Poſt ſuch Stories I ſhall tell,
As joyn'd to theſe, ſhall to a Volume ſwell,
(As true as Heaven) more infamous than Hell;
But you are tir'd, and ſo am I. ------ Farewel.